

To been his love, so she hir honour save;
for out and out he is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste.
And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
But swich is love, and eek myn aventure.

Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
for wel wot I myself, so God me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought,
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, whoso taketh hede;
And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye.
What wonder is it though he of me have joye?

I am myn owene woman, wel at ese,
I thank it God, as after myn estat;
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty lese,
Withouthen jalousye or swich debat;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me, Chekmat!
for either they ben ful of jalousye,
Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.

What shal I doon? to what fyn live I thus?
Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, par dieux! I am nought religious!
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knight, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame.

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte
Which oversprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorough hir soule pace,
That overspradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle.

That thought was this: Alas! sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in jupartye
My sikernes, and thralen libertee?
Alas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hir dredful joye, hir constreynt, and hir peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to peyne.

for love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of himself, that ever was bigonne;
for ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over the sonne:
Cherto we wrecched wommen nothing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke.

Also these wikked tonges been so prest
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrew,
That, right anon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harm ydoon, is doon, whoso it rewe.
for though these men for love hem first torende,
ful sharp beginning breketh ofte at ende.

How ofte tyme hath it yknowen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?
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To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicomth it, whan it is ago;
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight on it spometh;
That erst was nothing, into nought it torneth.

How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that jangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me;
for though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?

And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde: He which that nothing undertaketh,
Nothing ne achieveth, be him looth or dere.
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after dred awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bitwixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to playe.

Adoun the steyre anon right tho she wente
Into the gardin, with hir neeces three,
And up and down ther made many a wente,
flexippe, she, Charbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was to see;
And othere of hir wommen, a gret route,
Hir folwede in the gardin al aboute.

This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes,
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singe clere,
That it an heven was hir voys to here.

She seyde: O love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best can, to yow, lord, yewe ich al
for evermore, myn hertes lust to rente,
for never yet thy grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle joye and seurtee, out of drede.

Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
In love, ywis, that al that bereth lyf
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet;
for, lord, withouthen jalousye or stryf,
I love oon which that is most ententyf
To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned.

As he that is the welle of worthinesse,
Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodliheed,
Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernes,
Of vertu rote, of lust findere and heed,
Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed,
Ywis, I love him best, so doth he me;
Now good thrift have he, wherso that he be!

Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of love,
Of al this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?

And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!
This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
This doth me so to vertu for to entende,
That day by day I in my wil amende.

And whoso seyth that for to love is vyce,
Or thraldom, though he fele in it distresse,
He outhir is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmighty, for his shrewednesse,
To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
Defamen love, as nothing of him knowe;
They speken, but they bente never his bowe.

What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
And forthy, who that hath an heed of verre,
fro cast of stones war him in the werre!

But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyde, wol love, unto my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste.
Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne.

And of hir song right with that word she
stente,
And therewithal: Now, nece, quod Criseyde,
Who made this song with so good entente?
Antigone answerde anon, and seyde:
Ma dame, ywis, the goodlieste mayde
Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye;
And let hir lyf in most honour and joye.

forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,
Quod the Criseyde, and gan therwith to syke,
And seyde: Lord, is there swich blisse among
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?
Ye, wis, quod fresh Antigone the whyte,
for alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.

But wene ye that every wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why, nay, ywis;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot nothing of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevne; why? for they conne telle;
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.

Criseyde unto that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde: Ywis, it wol be night as faste.
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste;
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somwhat able to converte.

The dayes honour, and the hevenes ye,

The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westren faste, and downward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours yronne;
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
for lak of light, and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente yfere.

So whan it tyked hir to goon to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.
Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, & thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse.
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.
That herked she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente.

And, as she sleep, anon right tho hir mette,
How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,
And out hir herte he rente, and that anon,
And dide his herte into hir brest to goon,
Of which she nought agroos ne nothing smerte,
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
And in his chambre sit, and hath abiden
Til two or three of his messages yeden
for Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
Til they him founde, & broughte him at the laste.

This Pandarus com leping in at ones
And seide thus: Who hath ben wel ybete
Today with swerdes, and with slinger stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?
And gan to jape, and seyde: Lord, so ye swete!
But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste;
And he answerde him: Do we as thee leste.

With al the haste goodly that they mighte,
They spedde hem fro the souper unto bedde;
And every wight out at the dore him dighte,
And wher him list upon his wey he spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
for wo, til that he herde som tydinge,
he seyde: freend, shal I now wepe or singe?

Quod Pandarus: I y stille, and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be;
And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe;
At shorte wordes, thou shalt trowe me.
Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee,
And love thee best, by God and by my trouthe,
But lak of pursuit make it in thy slouthe.

for thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne,
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